

DIOSCORIDES' MATERIA MEDICA MANUSCRIPTS IN TURKEY

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Pedanius Dioscorides, an ancient Greek physician, botanist, and pharmacologist, was born in Anazarbus (presently near Adana in Turkey) ca. 40 A.D. and is well known for his five-volume book *De Materia Medica*; this work, as one of the earliest precursors to modern pharmacopeias, has been both a major influence on and a milestone in the development of pharmacy and botany.

This œuvre also gained popularity during the Ottoman Empire and is particularly associated with the title *Kitab'al Haşayiş*. In fact, one of the oldest copies of the manuscript (now referred to as the *Codex Vindobonensis*)—which was created in 512 A.D. for the daughter of the Byzantine Emperor Anicius Olybrius—had belonged to the chief physician of the emperor Suleiman the Magnificent (1494–1566), until it was sold by the physician's son and brought to Vienna from Constantinople by O. Ghiselin de Busbecq (1521–1592), the ambassador of the Austrian Monarch in the country at that time.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the existing manuscripts of Dioscorides' *Materia Medica* in Turkish libraries from the historical perspective and a brief description of each will be provided, with some sample pages highlighted.